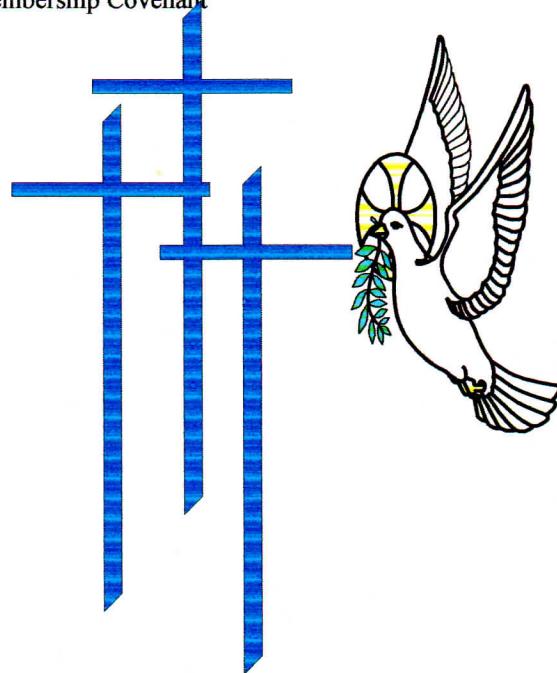


The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) Membership Covenant



THE
PHILADELPHIA
FELLOWSHIP
(BAPTIST)

Revelation 3:7-13

“THE PERFECTING CHURCH WHERE OVERCOMERS ARE MADE”

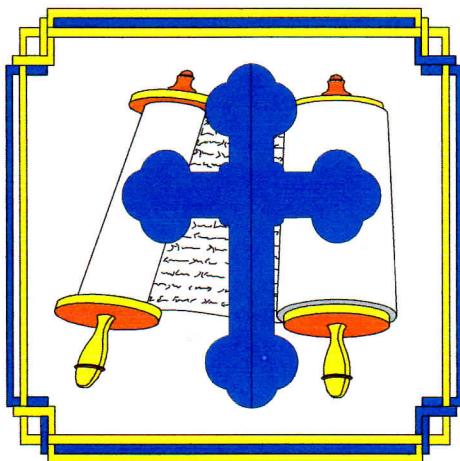
Membership Covenant

Organized June 7, 2000

Ronnie D. Joyner, D.Min., Pastor

“The Perfecting Church Where Overcomers Are Made”

The Introduction



This Membership Covenant is based on the Word of God. It is placed in your hands to be a concise directive for your Worship of God and assimilation within the spiritual life of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). There is no better document than the Word of God to give guidance to His people as they fulfill His purpose.

While some churches may call such a document a Church Constitution, we have chosen to base such outlined principles within more biblical terminology. This Membership Covenant is more like an epistle written to help those of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) know of its revealed purpose in God. Just as Rev. 3:7-13 references a very personal address to that church in Asia Minor, the import of such a spirit is the essence to be captured in this Membership Covenant.

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" NIV.

It is our prayer that the reading will be both Inspirational and Informational. We have a desire to be both Relevant and Reverent. May you be strengthened in Christ as you receive the Covenant axioms of life among us here at The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).

In Grateful Joy,
Pastor Ronnie D. Joyner, D.Min.

"The Perfecting Church Where Overcomers Are Made"

Article I Name



The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) was birthed on June 7, 2000. The name *Philadelphia* grows out of Revelation 3:7-13 and is a portrait of one of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Historically, Philadelphia was a city established by King Attalus II (159-138 B.C.), who was given the epithet *Philadelphus* (*brother lover*) because of his love for his brother. The city of Philadelphia was built in a dangerous volcanic area located about twenty eight miles southeast of Sardis. It

was completely destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17, but was completely rebuilt. The Church in Philadelphia represents ministry with a strong missionary dimension. It gets that implication from v. 8 through the phrase "*behold I have set before thee an open door*". As The Fellowship, Philadelphia is the ministry where brotherly love and sisterly affection are practiced. *Fellowship* (*koinonia*) references the open door or the opportunity to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and then to practice it in shared venues of ministry to those evangelized by this great gospel. Thus, The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) is a spiritual community partnership which communicates fully the love of God through a strong missionary flavor.

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Article II Our Purpose, Our Calling, Our Mission

The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) is an "open door" ministry - Rev. 3:7-13. As Jesus is "The Door" (John 10:7-9), **our purpose** is to provide access to Him. **Our calling** is to embrace the pillaged and give access to potential sheep that they may find their pasture in Him. Their pasture is found through the "Open Door". Though with "little strength", the pillaged will find a ministry of

brotherly love and sisterly affection awaiting them. We are Word Centered and Keepers of His Name. With such a personality, **our mission** is to be **The Perfecting Church Where Overcomers Are Made**, v.12. There is a passion for true **Kingdom Ministry** in these two mentioned texts. We will seek to emphasize this Kingdom clarity as the foundation of our ministry passion.

The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) takes seriously the biblical mandates as are found in Matthew 28:19,20 and Acts 1:8. In that one of the primary historical distinctives of the Church in Philadelphia was that of being missionary, we must place Kingdom emphasis in this area. Towards that end, The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) must be concerned not only with the immediate city of our origin, but also with the region of our presence and the broader borders of our embrace and affiliation. While the city of origin is Norfolk, as God will direct in the future, we will establish a ministry presence in Norfolk.

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Article III Doctrine

We believe in the triune God (Genesis 1:26a), the eternal self existent I AM (Exodus 3:13-15), the creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1,2) and Redeemer of mankind manifested in three persons: Almighty Father, Divine Son and Holy Ghost (Psalm 31:5; Luke 1:30-35; I John 5:6-12).

We believe in the Bible as the inspired (2 Timothy 3:16,17), infallible (Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 111:7-9), Word of God (Psalm 119:105), inerrant in the original autographs and the only rule of faith, guide for practice and indisputable and ultimate authority of the revelation of God, His Will and His Way (Ephesians 3:1-6; 2 Peter 3:14-18).

The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) Membership Covenant

We believe in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:1-26), in His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23), in His sinless life (I John 3:5), in His miracles (John 2:11), in His vicarious death and atonement through His shed blood (Romans 5:6-11), in His bodily resurrection (John 20:17, 19-23, 26-29), in His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 12:2), as our mediator (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15;12:24), high priest (Hebrews 8:1-3) and advocate (I John 2:1), and in His personal and visible return in power and glory for His Saints and with His Saints to reign in victory. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We believe in Jesus Christ as the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11,12) whereby He, by means of the Holy Spirit, brings men and women at salvation into relationship with Himself and His body, the Church (Ephesians 2:11-22). Believers are never commanded to be baptized with the Holy Ghost; it is in fact the baptism of the Holy Ghost that makes one a part of the Body of Christ (Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-7). All believers have been baptized by Christ with the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-29).

We believe in Jesus Christ as the sovereign giver of spiritual gifts to the church (Ephesians 4:7-16). We believe spiritual gifts are given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ and are given without regard to ethnicity, social class or gender.

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We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (John 16:12-15), and by Whom the Church is empowered to carry out Christ's Great Commission (Acts 1:8). We believe in the spirit filled life as desirable, valuable and an issue of obedience for all believers who are commanded to be filled with the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 5:18). We acknowledge that within the Body of Christ, the term *filled with the Holy Ghost* is often used interchangeably with the term *baptism of the Holy Ghost*. When referring to the controlling presence and power of the Holy Ghost as a result of the submissive will and desire of the believer, we allow such alternation of terms.

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We believe in the formal and intentional praise and worship of the Almighty God as a proper spirit-led corporate acknowledgment and response to His person and work (Psalm 46-50; Luke 7:36-50; John 4:23).

Article IV **Membership**

Section A. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ according to Romans 10:9,10 and wishes to align themselves with The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) may do so.

Section B. Members from other churches who embrace the doctrinal statements above may be received when presenting themselves for membership in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Respecting the membership ethics between the sisterhood of churches, we will notify your former church of your affiliation by letter.

The Meaning Of Church Membership

Church membership is the commitment of the believer to be identified and dynamically involved with this local body of Christians called The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) who have placed themselves under the authority of Jesus Christ.

The Nature Of Church Membership

Church membership is a divinely established, spiritually binding relationship between God and His people. This relationship is viewed through the channel of a spiritual agreement or covenant. This agreement outlines the parameters and function of all our covenant believers under His designated structure of authority and in accordance with the revealed guidelines of Scripture resulting in the personality or nature of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).

The Goal Of Church Membership

It is God's expressed desire that each member of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) become a disciple (a learner and follower) of Jesus Christ. Discipleship

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is that process whereby a Christian progressively learns to bring every area of their life under the lordship of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 10:24-39).

The Theology Of Church Membership

The Church has been established to be the covenant community which models the Kingdom of God on earth. As such, it is the role of the Church through its members to provide a divine alternative of God's activity in the world (without) at the same time becoming a part of the world (John 17:14-19; Romans 12:2).

The Vision Of Church Membership

Since it is the role of the Church to be God's selected seasoning in society, then it is the vision of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) to develop a comprehensive ministry of impact that affects both church and community. This comprehensive ministry extends itself in education, economics, politics, etc., so that the sovereignty and supremacy of Christ is demonstrated through the living membership (Matthew 5:13; Ephesians 2:19-23; Colossians 1:14-19).

The Accountability Of Church Membership

When a person becomes a member of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) he or she becomes a member of this Family of Christ. As such, one becomes a Child of God and a brother or sister within this family sheepfold. As accountable within this spiritual family, you are responsible for pursuing godliness through the application of the Scripture in your daily life. It is the responsibility of the church to assist the believer in achieving this goal as well as holding the member accountable through the process of church discipline as outlined under biblical authority (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:1-8; II Thessalonians 3:14,15).

The willingness to be accountable is reflected in the two symbols Christ left for us to submit to: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

Baptism-This symbol represents a believer publicly identifying with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in so doing pledges to live under His authority in the context of the local church (Matthew 3:13-17; Romans 6:1-11).

The Lord's Supper-This symbol represents the ongoing renewal of the Christian's commitment to Jesus Christ. It reflects one's continuous pledge of faithfulness through confession of sin and renewed dependence on God's grace (Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 11:20-34).

The Accountability Covenant

I Corinthians 4:1,2 states, *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. KJV.*

This scriptural reference has to do with the spiritual view of time, talent and treasure of a servant of God. Paul offers this view as a statement of his own stewardship before God. We base our stewardship of service upon this same principal. When reviewed, I Corinthians 4:1,2 is a statement of Accountability. Accountability defined is being responsible for that in which you have stated you would do. It is adherence and compliance to agreed upon directives which would govern one's actions and allegiance. Those who are of the membership and who will enter into some realm of leadership of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) should agree to the terms of such a definition and express such by calling it your Accountability Covenant.

The framework of this Accountability Covenant is designed so as to help the leader be clear upon the requirement of remaining faithful. Every leadership position of Philadelphia will be touched by the covenant parameters as it is directly out of the Word of God. Faithfulness is the primary requirement of every servant. For an example: When a church calls a pastor, certain areas of accountability are outlined and expected. Some of these areas are: To preach and teach the Word of God, performing weddings, funerals, dedications, etc. These items are part of the covenant entered into between that pastor and church. No less should be expected of those whom that pastor will be working with.

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When leaders are selected through biblical process (Acts 6:1-4), accountability should be expected. In order for Philadelphia to foster the full claims of God and His Word, and at the same time reflect the same to a viewing world, we must be accountable to God, to the church and to one another.

When unfaithfulness, and the lack of proper stewardship become apparent, it should be clear what the steps of correction should be. As unfortunate as it may be—**leaders become their own disciplinarians in this regard**. Christ has designed the "*Servant's Discipline Guidelines*" so that every attempt is inherent to help a person remain faithful, Matthew 18:15-17. Only when a breach of the covenant vow is made on the part of a person do they subject themselves to discipline (Hebrews 12:5-17).

What Constitutes Grounds For Leadership Review and Restoration In The Accountability Covenant?

Attendance: Grounds for Leadership Review and Restoration

When the Leader -(Associate Minister, Minister of Music, Deacon, Deaconess, Ministry Leader) have 2 or more absences per month for any printed or announced event for a 2 month or more period, this will serve as grounds for leadership review.

One should be present every time there is an event held, but please note that the events include: Church School, Morning, Evening and Mid-Week Worship, and fellowship services. Failure to attend these and other events as well as monthly leadership meetings will constitute grounds for leadership review (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37).

An example: When one missed Church School twice during the month of June and twice for the month of July and these absences did not fall within the agreed exemptions such as (work, or school schedules, health preventions, deaths or other emergencies which may rise from time to time), then leadership review would be warranted.

Leadership Review-one is relieved of their duties for one month.

Restoration-when one states their godly apology to the members of the Leadership and those you directly represent then resume your proper role.

Consistent breach of this attendance requirement within a six month period will disqualify that leader from their leadership position.

We recognize each leader as a mature servant, to that end, we believe we should be policing ourselves as we adhere to these covenant guidelines - Acts 2:43, 44; Acts 4:32. Those complying with the exemptions should do so prior to the event, such notification would be most appreciative.

Support and Service: Grounds For Leadership Review and Restoration

- A. Failure to visit and communicate with the sick and shut ins of the church and your ministry - Matthew 25:34-46; James 5:13-16.
- B. The neglect in paying the tithe & offering through the church envelope system Malachi 3:8-12, II Corinthians 2:14-17.
- C. Failure to interpret these covenant axioms to the ministry you are representing. (Colossians 4:5-9)
- D. The improper Christian witness and character which reflect upon the life of the church, the pastor and fellow leaders. Such a disregard affects members in our church community, and those who regard our influence - Colossians 3:12-25.
- E. The unfavorable publishing of rumor and innuendo of any member. (Colossians 3:5-17)
- F. Failure to model the biblical qualifications to model Christ in your home and among your family - Ephesians 5:22-33, will qualify you for grounds of Leadership Review

Leadership Review -relieved of your duty for one month.

Restoration-state your godly apology to the members of the Leadership and those you directly represent, then resume your proper role with the leadership.

Consistent breach of the support and service requirements within a six month period will disqualify you from that leadership position.

Other supportive scriptures should be referred to as we seek to keep one another inspired: Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:1-8; Galatians 6 and II Thessalonians 3:11-15.

The Biblical Basis For Church Membership

Acts 2:42-47 is our biblical basis for our congregational mission as a New Testament Church. As emphasized in these verses, we are concerned with emulating the key features of Christ and Church as emphasized in Scripture and Practice. Two primary features are highlighted: Evangelism and Discipleship. **Evangelism is the practice of our faith in winning others to Christ, while discipleship is the practice of our faith in building up those won to Christ.**

In that The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) is made up of individuals and thus families, knowing Christ and living like we know him should be our concern. Four areas which rises out of Acts 2:42-47 has become the means by which The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) has positioned itself to help each individual live within this saving and keeping knowledge of Jesus. These four areas are: **Christian Education**, v. 42a, 44, 46; **Fellowship**, v.42, 44, 45, 46; **Worship**, v. 42b, 43, 46, 47; and **Outreach**, v. 47.

The Ministry of Christian Education

Each member is to grow in biblical literacy and set forth its application in their lives. Participation in the varied areas of Christian Education is encouraged and expected of each member.

The Ministry Of Fellowship

To provide each member with the opportunity to feel at home in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist), each member is asked to assimilate into the life of your church. The clergy and lay leaders are expected to hold those

under their care lovingly responsible for their Christian lifestyles as well as to provide a context for mutual support and encouragement and relationship bonding and building.

Members must assimilate into the life of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) through The Men's Ministry, The Women's Ministry, The Youth Ministry and The Senior Citizen's Ministry.

The Men's Ministry

Men are primary in family life. They are "covenant keepers" Genesis 1:28-30. The covenant God made with Adam is still operative with "the Man" in every family. This structure for order has not changed on God's behalf, but it seems that man has abdicated his rightful place. Missplaced values by man, places him in questionable positions today.

When a man doesn't know what his role is, he is aimless and easily placed anywhere. Fathers must assume the position given them by God. Then, from that position, he is to give direction to the other members of the family. Such admonitions as these should remind Fathers of their Godly place and responsibilities:

"But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife..." I Corinthians 7:2-5, 10-16, 32-39; 11:3, 7-16 "...for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church..." Eph. 5:23 "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"...v.25; I Peter 3:7 "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instructions of the Lord." Eph. 6:4

The usefulness of men have extended responsibilites:
Single men have responsibilities, I Corinthians 7:25-29, 32-40 I Timothy 5:1 shares the disposition of younger men toward older men, and Titus 2:2,6 details the older man's responsibility toward the younger men.

The Women's Ministry

Women derive their role and functions from the Word of God as well. Eve was Adam's "Helpmeet", Genesis 2:18. She filled the void God detected in Adam, his aloneness. "Ribology" was fashioned into biology and Adam said, "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh", v.23. Her "femaleness" completed Adam's "maleness". Not from the ground, but out of Adam, Eve gives Adam a new understanding of himself. "His" is also "hers" the two become one flesh and "cleaving" becomes the paradigm we learn from them, v.24.

Eve had to be wife enough for Adam before she could become the mother of his children. She had to bring out the inner Adam before their sons could come forth. All that "being alone" had cultivated in Adam, now it was "being filled" by Eve. She recultivated a place and space in Adam which God had created in Him. She made Him forget that she was a rib, a bony protector, and led him to rename her as the derivative of all that satisfaction from another human could derive, Proverbs 31:10-31.

Such qualities of wives/mothers must coincide with this place Eve held. The New Testament admonishes: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord." Eph. 5:22

"...however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." v.33; I Corinthians 7:2-5, 10-16. "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:1-6.

The role of women have biblical guidelines: Single women have instructions, I Corinthians 7:20, 25-27, 34--39. I Timothy 5:2 emphasizes the **regard** between older women and younger women; vv. 3-16 references the stately ministry of widows; Titus 2:3,4 enunciates the **instructions** of older women to the younger.

The Youth Ministry

Children are special in the family context. Childbearing is a pleasant but painful experience, Gen. 3:16, they should be brought up in an environment of reverence of God, Psalm 128:1-4. The entire book of Proverbs should be read by every son and daughter. Jesus likened children to being "great" in Kingdom definition, Mark 9:33-37;10:13-16. I would suggest that every girl or young woman would read Luke 1:46-55. Here is the fulfillment of Gen.3:15 and the great joy associated with this woman becoming the mother of the Saviour of The World. Here is a restoration of the joy in birthing children. Children represent the *offsprings* of Jesus in His resurrection of us all.

Ephesians 6:1-3 is a New Testament reemphasis of Deuteronomy 5:16 which all children should remember. This is foundation teaching for proper home life which is also found in Colossians 3:20 and Eph. 5:22-6:4. I challenge all young people to read I and II Timothy completely. Timothy was a young man when Paul wrote to him about the leadership he was to carry out. Then I would like for the young person to read Titus, for he too was a young man in a leadership position.

If quality leadership is to be provided in this land of God, there must be those endowed with His principled intelligence to provide that leadership. Biblical wisdom must be the development tool today for the expression of biblical wisdom tomorrow. Properly trained sons and daughters will provide other sons and daughters with a group of spiritually endowed mates for days of quality living in the future.

Here is the cycle process in practice. Choices must be made, but who will be able to be considered for choosing if no development has produced any choices. This is a challenge to every church and family. The church has a responsibility to provide the setting for Family Growth and Development. The Family has a responsibility to take advantage of the offerings and work in it to keep it meaningful and ministering.

The Senior's Ministry

Those who are most seasoned and experienced among us are our Seniors. Older adults are the fastest growing segment of our church attending community. This ministry seek to examine the biblical honor due our seniors and then create practical avenues for us to do ministry. Two areas are immediately dominate in our focus, they are "honor" and "covenant community". To honor our elders means to acknowledge the significance of their years and to treat them as persons of worth. Elders are honored as repositories of wisdom and resourceful contributors to the covenant community as well as recipients of care.

With the Western leanings toward individualism, the contrast is vital to the covenant community. A sense of personhood and connectedness is the channel of our faith. Shared pasts afford us with the appreciation of a shared history, shared culture and shared challenges. Elders must be valued as important bearers of this history and culture. They are meaningful participants in the covenant community. They validate where we are because they know from whence we have come.

A covenant community cultivates cross generational relations as the context for this meaningful ministry. Reclaiming a communal ethic wherein all generations are seen as connected parts is the kinship cycle we wish to see evolve.

Additional ministry opportunities are in:

The School Of Ministry

~Training aspiring adults in the gospel ministry while they are earning an Associates Degree In Biblical Studies. All of these students are at least 30 years old, work everyday and study twice per week in this educational venue. The School of Ministry was started in 1998 and has graduated three classes.

The Evans-Smith Leadership Training Institute

~In partnership with The Samuel Dewitt Procter School of Theology of Virginia Union University, Richmond Virginia, this 26 year old continuing education unit Training Institute provides persons having "none to some educational" attainment with an opportunity to gain efficiency in service of the Lord for their local parish. More than 12000 persons have been helped in this most effective program since its inception.

□ The Christian Leadership Development Ministry

~This ministry serves two purposes. First, it becomes a second level of training for those who complete the Evans-Smith Institute and secondly, it has been developed for churches to send their lay members and or leaders to receive training for effective leadership.

□ The Breaking Free From Financial Bondage Ministry

~Here is a ministry which is an outgrowth of the book written by Pastor Joyner. This ministry is an interactive 21st Century approach that connects the sacred and the secular as it relates to principles taught and methodologies utilized in the realm of financial matters. This ministry advances stewardship education for children, young adults, pre-marital counseling and those who have been in financial bondage as a result of mismanagement. We have partnered with local insurance and financial service providers to offer a wide array of services for our Debt Warriors.

□ The Bible Based Family

~Here is another ministry defined after another book written by Pastor Joyner. This ministry seeks to apply biblical instruction to the role and function of each person who comprises the makeup of your family. This ministry describes how the creative spirit for family revival can be recaptured, how the family can develop positive education and economic systems and how these support systems can empower our people.

□ Practicing the “I Am” Sayings of Jesus

- *I Am The Door Ministry* has to do with helping persons acquire housing, positioning ourselves economically through Acts 2:45, involved in grant writing and helping persons acquire businesses, stay in business, obtain employment and plan careers.
- *I Am Alive Forever More Ministry* has to do with empowerment opportunities such as putting together revivals, crusades, conferences, seminars, workshops, travel tours and other settings of spiritual empowerment.
- *I Am The Bread of Life Ministry* has to do with our feeding ministry. This ministry works along with our Local Foodbank to service our deprived and neglected brothers and sisters.
- *I Am The Resurrection and the Life Ministry* is part of our counseling ministry for those caught in the clutches of substance abuse, spousal abuse and marital incompatibility.
- *I Am The Light of the World Ministry*-here is our church and community arm within our church. It has to do with social services, justice intervention, and making sense out of less than common sense situations.
- *I Am The Good Shepherd Ministry* is a ministry of care. We will house a Senior Citizen’s

Day Care, community programs and provide space for workshops which help to uplift humanity. We will continue to visit hospitals, nursing homes, jails, detention centers, prisons, college campuses, high schools, kindergartens, elementary and middle schools to shepherd those we embrace from brown grass to green pastures. It is a ministry of presence as well.

The Ministry Of Worship

Through worship, our goal is to help those who enter into our Fellowship to make the exaltation of God their number one priority in their lives. Once God is exalted in your life, through private and public worship, you will learn what that relationship entails as His authority and supreme purpose will replace your prior tendencies. Faithful participation through daily intimate engagement with Him, His Son, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word will guide one toward the reverence for God which worship provides. A key reminder for every member is that everything you do as a Child of God is colored through Worship. Everything you do is an act of worship.

The Ministry Of Outreach

Each member is to be serving in some ministry area of the church. Service helps to further the cause of Christ among us internally as we build up the local body and externally to the world for the salvation of the soul and the bettering of society. As a station of repentance and redemption, The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) has been given a message to share with the families of the world. We seek to have our doors open so that those who travel the highways and byways will be drawn into this station to receive the filling of this eternal message. **The Message:** Jesus died to save man from his sins. He was buried to provide the sacrifice of sin and raised victorious over our sins. We praise God for this message, we seek to share this message in everyway possible and expect the Lord of the Harvest to add to the church daily such as should be saved.

The Expectations Of Church Membership

A member of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) can expect to receive the following:

1. The faithful preaching, teaching and healing ministry of God's word so as to enable them to grow.
2. A comprehensive ministry designed to minister to the unique needs of all members of their family (Adults, youth and children).
3. A pastor who is with you and not above you-A Shepherd. In addition, associates in ministry- clergy and lay leaders, who will maintain regular contact with you so that the church is kept abreast of your needs, prayer requests and praises.
4. A dynamic context of fellowship and the building of quality Christian relationships.

The Responsibilities Of Church Membership

All members of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) are to fulfill three areas of covenant responsibilities:

1. As a member of this awesome Fellowship you have the primary responsibility to build yourself up in the Word of God so that the Spirit of God can produce the process of spiritual maturity in your life (I Peter 2:2).
2. As a member of this awesome Fellowship you have the corresponding responsibility to use your God Given abilities and time to impact the broader body of believers in the church as well as the non-believers outside of the church. This is accomplished through the selection and faithful participation in one area of church ministry (I Corinthians 12:12-27).
3. As a member of this awesome Fellowship you have the necessity to become a Steward of God. As a steward you begin to recognize that all you have has come from the owner - God and as such you are a manager of those resources. These resources includes time, talent and treasure. In order that your household function well, God has left a spiritual prescription, that is the Tithe. Tithing is a biblical principle which includes the totality of life and living. Here at The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) we embrace it as taught in

Malachi 3:8-12, Luke 6:38 and I Corinthians 16:1,2.

Section C. Modes of Dismission

- a. The membership roll of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) will be purged annually. Annual purging will consist of letters we have received from persons who have left the Fellowship, verbal notice given by said member (s) to the Membership Clerks with dated notation. Recognizing John 15:1-8, “*fruit*” in this text depicts presence within the foliage of the Fellowship. As our Lord makes clear in v.2 purging or pruning provides for more growth, “*He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that dies bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful*” NIV.
- b. Exclusion - Should any member become an offense to The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) and its good name by reason of unchristian conduct or by persistent breach of his or her Covenant vows, the church membership may withdraw fellowship from such member according to Matthew 18:15-20. Restoration is the ultimate remedy sought in this outlined step.
- c. Death - the death of a member, of course, dissolves his relationship with his earthly church as he or she transfers to the Kingdom above.

Article V Office of The Pastor

According to Jeremiah 3:15, the Pastor has come from the heart of God and according to Acts 20:28 the ministry given to the Pastor has been given by the Holy Spirit. For us here at The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist), our pastor is the Angel of the church - Rev. 3:7. As Angel he is our messenger as well as one protected in Christ’s right hand - Rev. 1:20.

The term *pastor* signifies the shepherd of the flock, and well suggests the nature of the ministry to be performed which is designed to sustain the Church. The ministry to be performed is that which was practiced by our Lord such as leading, feeding, guiding and guarding the flock committed to his care. The

pastor is the *poimen*, who gathers and feeds and leads the flock. The pastor has the superintendence of the Church as his primary function. The pastor is a gift to the church as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-16.

1. ***Episkopos*** - an overseer, superintendent, or guardian. It is a compound Greek word meaning to oversee to watch over and is used five times in the New Testament

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons." (Philippians 1: 1)

Also note Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7, I Peter 2:25.

2. ***Episkopoa*** - the verb form of the previous word and mean exercising the oversight; to oversee; to care for; to look at; to take care of. This word is used primarily regarding the work of a pastor or elder.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight..."
(I Peter 5:2)

I Timothy 3:1-7 outlines the office of a bishop and defines the disciplined axioms of leading the ministry. Key references are reflective of the place and influence of the wife, v.2 and children, v. 4 of the bishop/pastor. In a real sense, the effectiveness of the bishop/pastor is mirrored in the discipline expressed with the spouse and children.

The ministry head must first be bishop "in" the house, v. 5 before becoming bishop "of" the house, v.5. Home is the laboratory for formative leadership. The lessons which formulaize discipline in the home are first learned in the House of God. This biblical formula is glaringly seen in I Timothy 5:8 - *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever".*

The place of the bishop/pastor's wife is highly significant as well as the children. The same reverence and honor given to the bishop/pastor must also flow to his family as well.

How The Church Should Care For It's Pastor:

Section 1. The pastor's compensation should be based on biblical precedents along with adherence to federal/state tax compliance in keeping with the codes per his self employment designation - I Corinthians 9:9-14.

Section 2. Periods of pastoral refreshment shall be optional with the Pastor during each year. These periods shall consist of vacation, seminars, workshops, and conferences which shall help sharpen his ability to minister. Wisdom should dictate the scheduling of these necessities.

Section 3. In that our present pastor is the "Founding Angel of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist), according to Rev. 3:7, his position shall be permanent.

Section 4. When our pastor retires or hears the final call of God to come home, (death) it shall be the covenant role of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) to fulfill the biblical axiom (Numbers 3:2,3) and extend the pastorate to his first born son. In the event the first born does not feel the call of God upon his life to assume this office, the second son shall be extended the same covenant opportunity.

In the event the second son does not feel the call of God upon his life to assume this office, The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) shall follow the biblical outline as indicated in Acts 1:21-26 in filling the office with one of our present ministers who meet the following qualifications:

- (a). Must have been with the ministry from its inception, v.21.
- (b). Must possess the spiritual and academic preparation to continue the incompletely vision and have the acumen to take the ministry to its next spiritual level, v. 22.
- (c). Please recognize the character displayed by the two proposed

individuals in v.23. The text does not indicate that there was any animosity, resentment or contention between them. Your next pastor must display the same character. That individual must exemplify this quality of the resurrection in order that he or she be able to minister effectively.

- (d). Prayer must be ever so constant throughout this sacred period in the life of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Follow the one in the text, it worked then, be assured it shall work again, v.24.
- (e). Prayer preceded the casting of lots or the act of voting. Casting lots is an Old Testament method of determining the will of God (Joshua 18:6; I Samuel 23:9-12). Continue the biblical practice, pray before casting lots or voting by ballots. The outcome was by majority vote in the text, let it be the same among you, v.26.

Article VI **Associates In Ministry**

In the following sections we will outline what is called Associates In Ministry. Such a designation is the biblical definition of those Servant Leaders who are positioned to help the Pastor strengthen and maintain a healthy Fellowship. The following biblical definitions will help us know the role and functions of our Associates in Ministry who are Servant Leaders of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).

Acts 2:41-47 is foundational for the practice of ministry in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Of particular importance referencing Associates in Ministry, is The Vision Ministry. The Vision Ministry is made up of spiritually competent and dependable people who have shared in the growth and development of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) since its inception. Such a ministry was birthed by our Pastor to share the vision God had released for us and what it entailed. It helps us see who he has added, what gifts, talents and endowments the body possesses. The Vision Ministry has helped us create the network of faith which brings together The Pastor, his family, the Elders, their families, the Ministry Leaders and their families, and other key

individuals whose spirit has been touched by the vision among us. The Vision Ministry is intergenerational and have consistently met monthly in the tradition of Acts 2:41-47. We have literally gone from house to house breaking bread together and entering into deepened covenant relations as we heard God in the voices of the gathered saints. This ministry has been key in the sharing of and the clarification of the responsibilities of decision making.

In addition to the New Testament tradition we have followed, there is also an Old Testament principle for such shared ministry. Moses's father-in-law tells him in Exodus 18:13-26 how such Associates should function.

The setting involves Moses' leadership of the Children of Israel on their way to Canaan. Moses represents the leader in every family and in every church. He was the spiritual representative. He was providing strong spiritual leadership, fairness, accessibility and judgment. However, a question of his management skills is brought up.

The passage begins by describing a typical day in Moses' life as the "judge" or leader of the people, "the next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening", v.13.

Here we have one person doing what he has been assigned to do. But suppose he would teach others, delegate and multiply himself through them, how much more could be done? At this point we have a typical but stagnant situation. It was top heavy, and slow in becoming effective to those who had to wait all day to be considered. Moses "sat", the people "stood around him from morning till evening".

"Typical but stagnant" is the point family life and business relations get to when the initial hunger which produced such is no longer there. We should do all to keep stagnation from robbing us of our vibrancy in every phase of our family and church lives. Stagnant, No movement, No excitement, Nothing driving one to do more for God can be found among the leadership and even the congregation. Internal death is a danger that must be safeguarded against. At times when one is working to close to a situation and can't see nor detect the death within it, it is helpful to have someone else, who values your work, help you to analyze your activity.

Moses' father in law, Jethro, observed the situation and asked, "what is this you are doing for the people?", v.14. Notice the inquiry, "doing for the people?" At first glance it seems like the improper question for the proper action of Moses. He was the leader. Was he not supposed to be doing this for the people?

But a deeper revelation was in Jethro's inquiry. He asked further, "why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning till evening?", v.14.

The posture of Moses was being observed. To "sit alone" revealed his philosophy of leadership, management and ministry. Are the leaders in our church sitting alone? Is our congregation as active as it should be? Moses said, "the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God and His decisions", vv. 15,16. As spiritual leader, Moses seems to say that he is in a better position to answer the questions, give direction and make the decisions, he is positioned (by God) for this and the people expect it.

Jethro responds, "What you are doing is not good", v.17. This is a hard criticism to make and I am sure, a hard one to accept. Father in law, as well as a priest himself, Jethro continued - "you will surely wear out both yourself and this people with you, for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it all by yourself", v.18.

Here we have concern by Jethro, which could have been taken by Moses to border on conceit, a clash of callings and claims being made without compassion. But in the depth of his tired body, Moses could hear these words of relief.

Jethro, an older man in ministry, points out the result which occur when leaders fail to properly develop and delegate. Such a fault fulfills the insight of Jethro - the people and the leader become worn out. Burnout is likely in such an arrangement. Exhaustion can come as the result of a troubleshooting approach becoming the way of life. Soon or later the leader will be receiving the shots. Leadership then is robbed of its joy and replaced with drudgery from dealing with burdens, problems and failures.

Jethro saw a better way. "Listen now to me; I will counsel you, and God will be with you", v.19. Two primary keys: (1). There are times when "now" must be a period to advance a new direction. (2). Listening can be refreshing and family saving. Counseling, taking time to listen, is the adjustment many families and churches must gladly confront. In so many words Jethro seems to say, "Your heart is in the right place and there is no question that you love your work, thoughtful, sensitive and a caring leader, but let's maximize the resources available to you. Let's expand the reach of your love, your thoughtfulness, your sensitivity and your care. Let's see how your family and our church can grow and embrace more through this spiritual suggestion..."

Three key words are provided in Jethro's advice that are suggested to you for implementation.

First, v. 19 contains the key word - "*for the people to Godward*" or "*represent*".

Moses was reminded here that he was God's representative for the people and, **not God**. God had delegated authority to him without losing control, and now this reminder requires him to rethink his place with God and with the people. The only way he could present the case to God was if he had spent time with the people as God's representative or intercessor, defense attorney, or counselor. Moses primary time was to be utilized as a representative. He was to be with the people long enough to know what to present to God.

Now, he is to develop representatives who will help him to care for the people in a more encompassing, compassionate, swifter, more productive and inclusive arrangement. Associates In Ministry are to help develop their ministry area within the vision given to the pastor. Associates In Ministry must meet monthly so that they can pass on the vision monthly to their ministry constituency. Developing, cultivating and motivating the congregation to represent this vision is what you are called to do. In the New Testament, we see this become the ministry style of Jesus in utilizing the Twelve - John 6:11 and with the Early Church - Acts 6.

Secondly, v. 20 provides the key word, "*teach*".

Representatives can represent properly and effectively when they are taught. Teaching empowers or enables the representative. God taught Moses; Jethro, also taught by God, now counsels Moses, and he is "now" instructed to teach those who will represent him. "*Teach them the decrees and laws, showing them the way they must walk and the work they must do*" v.20.

Spiritually speaking, *teachers must give to others what God has given to them*. Decrees, ordinances, and laws are those commands and standards of life which must be enacted to live a fair, just and balanced life. Teaching helps to move those who are being taught closer to the teacher. Teaching takes on a new dimension in this instance, it allows those being taught a chance to see the teaching in action. Teaching is then exemplified, one is able to show another what to do and how to do it. This is where theory turns into practice. On the job training is enacted.

Teaching must take time. I know this is an awkward statement, but it has great relevance. What one grasps in a second may take someone else a week. Patience must consume the teacher. Working tirelessly to meet Dead lines must be replaced with cultivating a person while the work is being done. Cultivation must be put in place. Cultivation is the development process which allows that in which is being cultivated to grow per its own generic self. Teaching here carries more of a directional or suggestive implication. Leader, what comprises your meeting?, How much teaching is going on?

Teaching must be constant. The Early Church's Success Package is the foundation for

every family, church, organization and business. Acts 2:42 says, "and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers." The doctrine or teaching of the apostles was the same teaching they had learned from Jesus for three years, the period of his earthly ministry. They passed on what had been given to them. Every new convert and growing member was carried through and reminded of "the doctrine", the teaching of their beliefs. This instruction is necessary if effective living is going to take place. Our educational ministry must cover this teaching importance from the conception to the grave. In addition, our new members must be embraced with a complete doctrinal outlay of instruction for their proper growth and development.

Teaching that made a difference can make a difference. Before a teacher can teach, the teaching must have made a difference in his or her life. The teacher must have been "embraced" by the teaching if it is going to "embrace" others. An empowered teacher can teach others. An empowered leader can lead others.

Thirdly, v. 21 contains the key word, "choose".

An outgrowth of the teaching should provide by-products of the teaching. From the teaching, a pool of new teachers should evolve. Here is the nucleus of growing effective families and churches - The qualifications of family heads is indicated below as well as leaders within the life of our church:

"Moreover, you shall choose able men from all the people - God fearing men of truth (trustworthy) who hate unjust gain - and place them over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, to be their rulers. And let them judge the people at all times; every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you."

In "choosing" these helpers, partners, the criteria is trustworthiness. This trait is conditioned by their teaching, developing them with the fear or respect of God and unwilling to embrace the ungodly practices of bribes or sell out suggestions by others.

I know, if you "represent" the people before God properly, and "teach" the biblical authority of God's Word, he will lead you in the "choosing" process.

Did you hear how much your family and The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) would grow if we followed this prescription? The Word says that you will have leaders to place over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Pass on the Story and see how God will expand our ministry. What is the size of your family now, in love and togetherness, our church in members, your ministry in impact and influence? I believe you should adopt the principles in this case study and become situated for more.

Finally, the counsel Jethro gave Moses was just that - Counsel. A decision had not been made by Moses as to whether or not he would incorporate it. Jethro's words in v.23, "...if you do this, and God commands you..." showed that he understood he was providing Moses with counsel or advice. Jethro knew that Moses had to carry this before God for final instructions. A true leader operates from the basis of counsel and revelation - what God reveals to him or her. This is the principle upon which the church is built (Matthew 16:18).

Jethro continues, "If you will...you will be able to endure (the strain), and all these people also will go to their homes (tents) in peace." Very seldom do you hear of "peace" associated with family relations, church affairs, organizational programs and procedures as well as business regulations. But this promise is based on the principle of God and Moses moved upon it. Verse 24 states, "So Moses listened to and heeded the voice of his father in law and did all that he had said." " Moses chose able men out of Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times: the hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they decided themselves."

The pastor has the superintendence of this Church as his primary function. Others in the clergy realm of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist), such as Elder, Associate Elder, Evangelists, Assistant Pastors, Assistant to the Pastor, Associate Minister, Minister of Music etc., may only minister as our pastor and congregation designates. These clergy persons may minister as support in the care and growth of the church. James is understood to have been pastor of the Church in Jerusalem; but Paul and Barnabas, Apollos and Cephas preached the Gospel from place to place, as ambassadors of Christ and heralds of the great salvation, planting churches and setting in order affairs, but without a local pastorate.

Though we have evangelists, missionaries and other ministerial service persons without pastoral responsibility-yet, for the most part, ministerial service is identified with the pastorate. In Romans 12:6-8 and I Corinthians 12 we see where the Spirit develops a plurality of ministers, some, according to their peculiar gifts and graces, devoted themselves especially to pastoral work, as each Church might desire or have need, and some to preaching only, or chiefly. Certainly, in all ages, some have been better adapted to one department of the ministry, and some to the other. Thus could the churches have the largest amount and the best application of the ministerial service and be most edified.

God's purpose for government is to provide order, direction and vision in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). By products of such governing knowledge will produce strength, comfort and security within Philadelphia. This "lifeline" is the very salvation of the believer and the order through which each believer will grow and develop within The Fellowship.

There is need for a time of training before one is placed in the saddle of a ministry and ongoing training to remain effective- I Timothy 3:6,10. Our Lord was known as a rabbi or called master and teacher. Such titles and references states emphatically that Jesus embodied the height of intelligence through training. Our pastor has an earned doctorate degree in ministry. The standard has been established. Every minister in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) must pursue some course of study inside the Fellowship through its School of Ministry or outside of it in some approved, accredited and recognized theological or ministry related institution - 2 Timothy 2:15.

Elder's Council

The Elder's Council is a vital ministry group within the Associates In Ministry. The Elder's Council is made up of men and women who have obeyed the unction of the Holy spirit to step out on the Word and to carry the gospel message to a dying world. These are the men and women chosen and called by God to not only preach/teach but assist the pastor in all of the duties associated with ministering to the flock. The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) is blessed to have a strong, diversified and seasoned Elder's Council who according to Ephesians 4:1 "*...walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*".

In The Old Testament

There are seven basis terms used to describe the official capacity of one who was a leader in the Old Testament. The official term is called an Elder or one who is elderly. The implications of the office of an Elder also point to the ministry and function of those we call bishops, pastors and a plurality of elders.

1. **Zagen** = old, aged, elder, eldest

"Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born." (Genesis 10:21) Also note Genesis 25:23; Exodus 3:16; Deuteronomy 5:23.

2. **Sivb** = to become aged; old age

See Ezra 5:5; 6:7,8,14.

Elder as used in the Old Testament is referring to an older person, whether a man or a woman.

In The New Testament

1. **Episkopos** - an overseer, superintendent, or guardian. It is a compound Greek word meaning to oversee to watch over and is used five times in the New Testament.

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons."

(Philippians 1: 1)Also note Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7, I Peter 2:25.

2. **Epeskopoa** - the verb form of the previous word and mean exercising the oversight; to oversee; to care for; to look at; to take care of. This word is used primarily regarding the work of an elder.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight..."
(I Peter 5:2)

3. **Sumpresbuteros** - a compound word and is only used once in the New Testament. It means fellow elders or co-elders.

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder."
(I Peter 5: 1)

4. **Presbuteros** - elder, older person or senior. It is used in several ways:

- a. Often we apply it to a person who is merely older than others around him. *"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as father..."*

"The elder women as mothers..." (I Timothy 5:1,2) Also note John 8:9, Acts 2:7, Luke 15:25, Titus 2:2,3.

- b. It is used to refer to the forebear of Israel. *"Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?"* (Matthew 15:2) Also note Hebrew 11:2, Mark 7:3-5.
 - c. It is used to refer to the official leaders of the Jewish people (Sanhedrin Council). *"And when he heard about Jesus, He sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave."* (Luke 7:3) Also note Matthew 5:22; 10:17; Mark 13:9; 14:55; Acts 4:5-8; 18:8.
 - d. We apply it to people filling godly ministry positions in the life of a church. These persons become appointed officials. *"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."* (James 5:14) Also note Acts 14:23; 20:17,18; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1. Among the early Christians this word was also used regarding official, spiritually qualified leaders appointed to have spiritual oversight of the churches.
5. *Presbuterion* - assembly of aged men or the order of elders. It applies to the Sanhedrin Council of seventy elders. (Refer to Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5). Also, in I Timothy 4:14 this word is translated presbytery. In summary, it simply refers to any group of elders gathered together in sessions. The word elder has a Hebrew background whereas the word bishop has a Greek background, but both are descriptions of the same person with the same office.

As we carefully examine the words elder and bishop there is a notable connection between the two. Elder refers to this servant's spiritual maturity and stature, while Bishop refers to the office that the elder occupies. Shepherding or pastoring is the work this servant does. "The term *presbuteros* or *elder*, was evidently derived from the synagogue, and chiefly by Jewish Christians, to designate the same

person, especially as in the synagogue elderly and dignified persons were selected as the official directors of religious affairs. The new churches everywhere formed themselves on the model of the mother Church at Jerusalem. At the head of each were the *elders* (presbyter, bishop), all officially of equal rank, though in several instances a peculiar authority seems to have been conceded to some individual, from personal considerations." (Neander, p. 184; Gieseler, sec. 29). This is easily confirmed in the following verses with the original Greek in parentheses behind the English translation:

"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders (presbuteros) of the church ... take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos). (Acts 20:17,28)

"And ordain elders (presbuteros) in every city... for a bishop (episkopos) must be blameless." (Titus 1 :5,7)

"The elders (presbuteros) which are among, you I exhort... feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (episkopeo) thereof..."
(I Peter 5:2)

Origin of the Office

The earliest definition of the office, (not just reference, that is in Ex. 3:16) of elder comes under the leadership of Moses - Exodus 18:21. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, provided counsel to Moses regarding how to handle the many needs of the people efficiently. The first mention in the New Testament is in Acts 11:30 and seems to infer that all clearly understood their function. Perhaps the reason is that the office of elder was not a new office to the New Testament Church. It was very familiar to people because it had been in operation for several hundred years and was an office common to every Jewish synagogue.

The following serves as a pattern concerning the role and function of elders in the scripture:

1. Elders were inaugurated as a matter of practical consideration.

Moses' problem was that the weight of the responsibility of leading God's people had become more than he singularly could handle, Exodus 18:17,18.

2. Elders are always plural in number. Only in its beginning stages will a church have one elder. We see that an established church had more than one Elder. Acts 11:30, 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18.
3. Elders have a specific function and responsibility. When we refer to elders in an official sense, they always have a specific ministry description that demands a good deal of their time. They are active, functioning leaders of people, Exodus 18:21,22.
4. Throughout the history of Israel, political and religious affairs operated under the supervision of elders. Even when Israel did not have political autonomy, they still maintained an eldership. For example, during the Babylonian captivity, they established the synagogue to keep the people of God distinct in a foreign environment. Every synagogue contained elders whose job was to guide, govern and instruct the people, Jeremiah 26:17-19.

The Responsibilities Of The Elder's Council

Primary in the life of each Elder is the personal responsibility to practice one's piety before God. One cannot minister effectively to others nor before others if they first have not ministered before God. Such a practice of piety will provide the substance of Worship which must season the life of the congregation. The spiritual diet for the congregation comes from one spending time with God and making intercession for the saints.

One of their duties of an Elder is to stand in the place of the Senior Elder/Pastor until he arrives. There should always be continuity within the headship of the church. Once he arrives respect for his arrival should proceed. Otherwise, stand in proximity of the Senior

Elder/Pastor when he is in place. Elders help build continuity by your practicing presence. Whether in conducting the devotional part of all services as they prepare the congregation to receive the Word, representing the Senior Elder/Pastor in some functions of families of the congregations, continuity of this Office should never be impugned.

Another responsibility is to resolve problems and address issues of concern among the Elders through the process of mediation. In the event a problem is not resolved, the Senior Elder/Pastor then takes steps to settle the matter.

After consultation with the Senior Elder/ Pastor, the Elder's Council implements policies and procedures which benefits the ministry, spiritually. Another one of their responsibilities in spiritual matters is to serve as a creative sounding board with the Senior Elder/Pastor. The discovery and placing of spiritual gifts becomes a primary consideration here. Following Habakkuk 2:2, the spiritual consideration must be presented in written form to the Elder's Council, then to the Senior Elder/ Pastor for direction.

Associate Elders

Persons who believe that they have a strong desire to minister in the Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) will receive this designation of Associate Elders or Elders in training. Such individuals who believe that they must "*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called*". Associate Elders will serve as ecclesiastical support for the Office of The Pastor and will operate as students and learners in ministry. These faithful, anointed and active members will serve in many areas such as accompanying the pastor in adjutant capacities, being armor bearers to the Elders, ministering to the sick and shut ins of the congregation, in Nursing Home ministry, feeding the hungry, jail/prison ministry and as learners in some counseling sessions.

Requirements

The requirements that must be satisfied to be considered for an Associate Elder: Must be a member of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) for one year. Must have completed the New member's training, be a tither, faithful in at least one area of Philadelphia's teaching ministries and showing commitment to the vision of the Senior Elder/Pastor.

As these requirements are being met, one must enroll in either the Evans-Smith Leadership Training Program, the Christian Leadership Development Program or the Associates Degree Program in Biblical Studies. Upon completion of all course work, and an interview with an Elder Mentor, the student may move into the final stage for the Preparation For The Ministry of An Elder. During this period, you are expected to commit toward the full proofing of your ministry. Initial sermon preparation will be entered into with exhortation before the Elder's Council. Thereafter, they are granted to preach their first sermon on a designated Wednesday Night. Licensing into the Gospel Ministry will follow with subsequent preparation for Ordination. Ordination preparation will be considered for a work to be fulfilled by the will and direction of God and the Senior Elder/Pastor.

Section 1: Associates In Ministry - Deacons

In the New Testament churches, needs of various kinds would arise from within the congregations. It was because of these various needs that the office of a deacon came into existence within the New Testament Church - Acts 6:1-7.

"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the

ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:1-4).

We see also in the wisdom of God that He has provided deacons (servants) to assist the pastor. The chief responsibility of the deacon is to serve as helpers to the pastor in the work of the ministry. The pastor is like Aaron the priest while the deacon is that of a Levite.

In some respects, we can see this pattern for relationship in the Old Testament between the Priest and the Levites. The priest's area of responsibility was to sacrifice for the people as commissioned by God. In the light of that responsibility there was constant preparation and maintenance that had to be performed. In the wisdom of God, He provided the Levites to help serve the priesthood and to get everything done that pertained to their priestly function.

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. And they shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting to do the service of the tabernacle. They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting alone with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. You shall thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel. So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death" (Numbers 3:5-10).

The deacons are directly under the charge of and accountable to the pastor and accountable to the congregation for righteous deportment. The pastor is able to delegate authority to them to fulfill specific functions in the church. The authority of the deacons flows from their being an extension of the pastor.

A deacon must be a servant before they become a deacon. In The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) our deacons must exhibit a true servant spirit. *"Lay hands on no man suddenly is a command given to the elders"*-I Tim. 5:22. This is important to remember, one's character is

under review before an appointment is made to serve as a deacon rather than using the office as a testing ground.

Four primary Greek words shed light on the ministry of deacon in the scripture. They are "diakoneo," "diakonia," "diakonos" and "diako." The Greek word for deacon occurs many times in the New Testament and in most cases is properly translated. Occasionally however, when this same word is used in connection with an office in the Church, the word is not translated but transliterated. Evidently the office of the deacon is also an area of wide interpretation. To overcome some of these misunderstandings it is necessary to look at the biblical words and see how they are used throughout the New Testament. Following is a summary of the definition and usage of each of these words in the New Testament.

1. *Diakoneo* literally means "to be an attendant, to wait upon." In the New Testament it refers to waiting on someone at a table as a waiter (Luke 22:24-27); serving someone in any way (Matthew 4:11, 27:55; Acts 19:22; 2 Corinthians 8:19); taking care of (2 Corinthians 3:3; Acts 6:2); helping or supporting someone (Matthew 25:24; Luke 8:3; Romans 15:25); the ministry of a church official. "*And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless*" (I Timothy 3:10). This particular word is translated several ways in the King James Version: "minister," "servant," "deacon."-1 Tim. 3:8 The apostles and other prominent Christians are seen in this capacity (Colossians 1:23; Ephesians 3:7; 2 Corinthians 3:6).
2. *Diakonia* literally means "service or attendance as a servant". In the New Testament it is used to refer to all manners of service (Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 4:12; Acts 6:4); the service necessary for the preparation of a meal (Luke 10:40); the service or function of all New Testament ministries (I Timothy 1:12; Acts 20:24; I Corinthians 12:5; Colossians 4:17); aid, support or distribution especially of alms and giving to the poor (Acts 11:29; Romans 15:31; 2 Corinthians 8:4); a specific ministry in the Body of Christ (Romans 12:7). This word is

translated "serving," "ministry," "ministration," "relief," "office," "service," "administrations," "ministering."

3. *Diakotios* literally means "a waiter, attendant, "servant or minister." In the New Testament it refers to a personal servant (Matthew 20:26: 23:11; John 12:26); a helper or an encourager (I Thessalonians 3:2: 1 Timothy 4:6); an official of the Church (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8). This word is translated "minister," "servant," "deacon." The apostles and other prominent Christians are seen in this capacity (Colossians 1:23; Ephesians 3:7; 2 Corinthians 3:6).
4. *Diako* - Although this word is not found in the New Testament, it is significant in this study because it is generally regarded as the root word from which the other three are derived. It literally means "to run or hasten on errands."

When viewed all together, it becomes evident that these words are closely related and that they are used in primarily two ways, an unofficial way and an official way. In the unofficial sense, they refer to any kind of serving - ministry in the home, ministry of civil rulers, ministry of angels, ministry of various servants and ministry of all believers regardless of their calling in the Body of Christ. It is in this sense that every born-again believer is to have a "servant's heart."

These four words are also used in an official way. It is very clear from certain passages that these words are referring to a special class of people who have proven themselves and were thus designated "deacons" or literally "servants." These would obviously be people who had distinguished themselves in this capacity by their excellence and were utilized by the churches in certain designated areas of responsibility. This then, became a specific office for which qualifications were set down. "*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phillipi, with the elders and deacons*" (Philippians 1:1).

We should also take notice that the ministry of a deacon varied and varies from church to church, depending upon the specific situations within each

local assembly. One universal truth was exceedingly clear to all the churches regarding the ministry of deacons. They were to be the servants of the family of God.

Section 1.1 The Finance Ministry

At this writing there are five persons who comprise this ministry. As an area of significant stewardship responsibility, each member of this five member ministry carries the Deacon designation within The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). At present, the Administrative Assistant For Finances is a paid staff position with the remaining members receiving quarterly stipends for services rendered. The remaining 4 (four) members of the Finance Ministry are: Treasurer of Finances, and Assistant Treasurers of Finances. Although the ministry performed by each member is different, the ministry status is equal and the same. The financial outlays are indicated in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) yearly budget.

Any persons appointed to serve as a Deacon with emphasis upon this Stewardship area in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist), must meet the same qualifications as any other servant known as a Deacon. Anointed obedience must be consistent. Divine order must be followed. Any persons ministering to God's people must have the same anointing as the local Pastor/Apostle or Priest - Numbers 11:16,17; Psalm 133; Luke 9:1,2. Any thing less will spell less than blessings for that local congregation. This principle is consistent with the order of God.

To be very clear, every member of the body of Christ is a Deacon/Steward. As Deacon/Stewards of God, we have been entrusted with the gifts of God to live off on a daily basis. Whether we are a good and just steward or a bad and unjust steward, that determination is made relative to our obedience to Christ and the principles of stewardship he followed- Luke 16:1-15.

Biblical authority sets the order for handling the stewardship of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). There is an anointing which should be reflective of those designated by God to handle that which is offered to him. The first biblical evidence of the giving and receiving of tithes and offerings

is in the Old Testament. Abraham was the giver and Melchizedek was the receiver (Genesis 14:20). Melchizedek held two offices, one was King of Sodom and the other, "*he was the priest of the most high God*" - Gen. 14:18. God established the order of the priesthood being the receivers of his tithes and offerings in the instance of Melchizedek. In the New Testament, the apostles became the receivers of and the distributors of the financial renumerations of the local church - Acts 4:34,35. Later reference to the qualifications of one who will hold the office of a Bishop/Pastor carries that individual as being a steward, being able to rule his own house with the same kind of rule or standard to take care of the church of God. Such excellence of stewardship should be so practiced so that the pastor should not be greedy of filthy lucre - I Timothy 3:3,5.

We will see in examples to follow how an anointed obedience allowed the blessings of God to be so overflowing until those who served as stewards or trustees for others, had to get stewards for themselves. Anointed obedience must be practiced in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Precedence has been established. In the Acts 4:34,25 reference, the New Testament Church flourished. It flourished so much until designated help had to be appointed. The designated help being appointed is outlined in Acts 6:1-7. Those appointed were called "*the servant of the tables*." These appointed individuals were appointed by the apostles after calling the congregation together to correct the problem of neglect with the widows, due to the rapid growth of the church. I hasten to point out the order of God as is indicated in verse seven which is consistent with Gen. 14:20. Acts 6:7 says, "*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priest were obedient to the faith.*" This "company of the priest" references John 12:42 and the hesitancy of many of the Jewish priesthood accepting the ministry of the apostles. Harmony and unity were gifts given by God to the lifestyle practiced by the New Testament Church. This lifestyle was used by God as a tool of evangelism to bring once doubtful and hesitant persons to him.

There is an anointed obedience which flows when the life of the body is in harmony with God's order. Following divine order is key to the blessings which will flow within the life of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).

Referencing Acts 6:1-7, the apostles did not leave it up to the congregation to place whom they thought would be proper servants of those tables, qualifications were established and made known to the congregation before appoints were made. The qualifications were:

1. of an honest report
2. full of the Holy Ghost
3. and Wisdom.

Deacon/Stewards who fulfill these qualifications can keep mismanagement from becoming a plague in a congregation's life. Such a Deacon/Steward need to be practicing the biblical teaching which informs godly stewardship. With such authority from God's word, a Deacon/Steward will develop the steward's attitude when it comes to ministering in the financial affairs of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Each Deacon/Steward will know that it is no longer their money, but God's and that accounting time is always just around the corner - Matt. 25:14-30.

It is apparent that many churches have money problems. Let's profit from that reality here at The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). Could it be that there is a lack of biblical stewardship knowledge to turn the two fish and barley loaves into a banquet from week to week? Deacon/Stewards are commanded to be managers. Managing money has to do first with having love for God and his church, then following proper biblical guidelines to care for the fiscal affairs of that local church - I Samuel 22:1,2.

How many promises of God should the Deacon/Steward of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) know from God? What has God said that can be practically used to leave poverty's dark door and enter into a promise - filled future? I believe we need biblically knowledgeable deacon/steward. Such a servant cannot be one sided and ineffective in this ministry, one must be spiritually sound in the promises and financial deportments of God.

A biblically knowledgeable Deacon/Steward must be acquainted with the Covenant Promises of God. When this is done, Deacon/Stewards will not be so induced to frustrate a God directed budget process with human faithlessness.

There are too many "we cannot" dropping from the lips of biblically ignorant trustees. Such persons are not in touch with similar biblical situations and think the problems being faced today are first time events. No Deacon/Steward have to think that they are congregational police and must protect to serve instead of serve to protect. Such mindsets create needless and unprofitable periods of contention. God has never given a vision to a pastor and people without giving provisions to see that vision through. The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) must produce Deacon/Stewards who walk in the anointing of God as is reflected in our pastor. The "same anointing" reflects unity in this shared ministry center.

Deacon/Stewards must be bible students. They must attend bible study, church school and be active in bible training. They must enter into a survey of biblical events which will help in seeing the hand of God reveal itself in some famine, vision questionable and highly suspect times. Biblical examination must help the serious financial servant come to grips with God's promises which can sustain a congregation in seeming unsustainable times. Such questions such as What did God instruct Adam and Eve to do in Gen. 1:26-29, should be points of investigation instead of other demon derived points of investigation, interrogation and discrimination.

One of the characteristics of a Bishop/Pastor is "*as God's steward, blameless*" - Titus 1:7. Acts 4:34 and 35-highlight the primary agents responsible for the funds of God received from that local congregation. This primary agent was the apostles' feet. "*There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostle's feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need.*" With such a lofty biblical responsibility, if that apostle or pastor releases this responsibility to other hands, they must bear the spirit of that pastor or apostle. Any other Deacon/Steward, with another spirit or motivation, will bring illness to the financial situation in particular and to the church in general. Such a person is out of Godly order.

Deacon/Stewards must be tithers, offering givers, not thieves and robbers, not cursed spiritually, but praisers, worshipers, prayer warriors, minsters of the

first magnitude and obedient servants. Are you familiar with Melkon, King of Persia; Balthasa, King of Arabia; and Casper, King of India? These are the names tradition has ascribed to "The Three Wise Men." Deacon/Stewards must be "wise men and women" who will follow the star of Jesus and come to worship him. A key stewardship teaching is found in Matthew 2:11. It says, "*and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*"

Two words must be spoken here. First, Counting money should never come before the worship of Christ. Many have raised the question of convenience, when is the best time to count the money? The answer, only after you have worshiped! Since each believer is a Deacon/Steward, we must start each day with worship.

Secondly, Deacon/Stewards should be such worshipers, that they should encourage others to open their treasurers and present more than just money. The gift of gold should serve the purposes for gold, but frankincense and myrrh have place in the House of God. Deacon/Stewards should identify the significant place for frankincense. This fragrant gum should bring a sweet anointing into the counting room and in the deliberations surrounding the paying of bills, identifying the best place to invest monies so that the money works for us instead of us working for the money. This fragrance should induce faith and counteract the noise of the uncommitted and a questionable money strapped future. Myrrh, an aromatic gum should denote the ministry of these financial servants. The aroma of worship should personify each person and the embodiment of such a gum substance should exemplify the depth of maturity. Here is a great revelation for all of us who have found Jesus Christ. As his Kings and Queens, we should do as these "wise men" - worship him.

Deacon/Stewards must be faithful and fiscal. They must be communicators, in touch with the best financial instruments through which the church may assign some of its liquid assets for future ministry endeavors. Since we are not to be borrowers but lenders, (Deut. 28:12), funds should be properly assigned to produce lending capability. When The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) can reach lending capability, it will never have to rely on some other institution for

borrowing. Who should be responsible for setting these funds in proper places, Trustees! Jesus made this clear in Matthew 25:14-30. It is the story or parable of the Talents. Verse 27 says of Jesus - *"Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest."* Deacon/Stewards should be astute in money management. Those on Wall Street should be taking pointers from those you manage the funds of Him who live on Number 1 Golden Street. These Deacon/Stewards should be planning, announcing, teaching and encouraging the membership in the area of Godly Stewardship and Biblical Economics.

Biblical Directives In Securing A Financially Stable Church

The Finance Ministry should be the immediate accounting help of the pastor and of the church in the practice of sound stewardship. At all time the Finance Ministry should reflect strong support in every area of church life. Finance Ministry should be leaders in the area of paying the tithe and giving the offering.

What should be the process of practicing stewardship after receiving the offering each week?

As is the ideal, those who are committed to counting the tithes and offerings weekly should be a volunteer group of trusted individuals. These persons, who could be known as a Finance Ministry, has responsible for the actual counting of the offering and preparing the deposit and count sheets which are given to the church bookkeeper to record. All funds should be deposited the day received and a report given to the Pastor indicating the source of the funds, ex. - How much was given in the Tithes & Offerings, Building Fund and other offerings.

During the counting process all envelopes should be tallied and should be matched with the actual funds for accuracy. These envelopes are then posted to the account of the individual contributions. Numbered envelopes expedite the posting process. The numbers are much easier to read and sorting is made much simpler. Such a system is helpful when using a computer or even if a ledger is used.

Here are five helps which should be kept in mind:

- A. All disbursements should receive authorization for spending. No money should be spent without proper prior approval. Budget outlays should provide overall guidelines, which should not make this process difficult. A log of weekly or monthly designations should also be provided to the pastor which details the disbursements. These disbursements include salaries, utilities, mission gifts, etc.
- B. Separation of duties. Those who sign checks should not count money or record contributions. The same person should not receive, record, and spend the church's money.
- C. Bank reconciliation. Neither the person who sign the checks or deposits the funds should reconcile the bank statement.
- D. Petty cash fund. A petty cash fund provides for small payments that would not be practical to necessitate writing a check. Control of this fund should be the responsibility of one individual who must at all times be prepared to give an account for its use.
- E. Financial statements should answer questions. There is no need to develop a record keeping system nor a budget if we are not interested in how we are doing. Financial statements are the end result of our stewardship. Monthly we should be able to examine our stewardship.

The key to Christian giving is growth, growth for the church and growth for the individual member. In order for us to determine our direction, our objectives, and our goals, we need to determine some very important things about our church:

- I. Determine the giving record of the church membership
 - A. Prepare a church giving evaluation chart which reflects giving per month and per year.
 - B. Determine how many church members are currently giving on a regular basis.

- C. Determine the average gift by the church membership.
 - D. Determine the average income of the church membership.
 - E. Determine the average percentage of income given.
- II. Let's be proactive in encouraging each church member to practice sound stewardship. Utilization of the following will be helpful:
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sermons | Budget emphasis |
| Sunday School Lessons | Pledge Covenant |
| Bible Studies | Use of scripture during offertory |
| New Member Training | Bulletin Inserts |
| Offering Envelopes | Testimonies |
| Tracts | Videos |
- III. Develop a Malachi 3:8-12 Plan to produce more tithers in the church.
- IV. Lead the church in ridding itself of its debt and at the same time help the membership rid themselves of debt- Deuteronomy 15:4-6.
- V. Recognizing that Judas was the treasurer for Jesus, learn from his example and prevent the Judas Spirit from entering into the church to undercut the ministry of Jesus Christ here in Philadelphia - Luke 22:47,48.
- VI. After reading Luke 4:16-19, you see that it outlines the Ministry Focus of Jesus and Philadelphia. As a member of the Finance Ministry, how can your role help to insure its viability?
- VII. Let the anointing of Jesus guide you in all phases of your personal life and in your ministry as a member of the Finance Ministry- I John 2:27.

Section 2: Associates In Ministry - Deaconess or Female Deacon

"Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things." (I Timothy 3:11)

There seems to be good evidence that many women served in the New Testament Church as deacons. In the above scripture verse Paul makes special admonitions to women who would function in this capacity. The King James Version would lead us to believe that these admonitions are only for the wives of deacons. However, careful analysis of this passage seems to indicate that this is not the case, but that these qualifications form a whole new classification of workers. This becomes evident for the following reasons:

1. The Greek word translated *wives* in the King James may also be translated *women*. Either translation is accurate and the word is translated these two ways consistently throughout the New Testament. Whether *wife* or *woman* is used in any particular passage is the translator's choice and can only be determined by the context. The general rule applying to this word is that it should always be translated *women* unless the context clearly implies that it is referring to a *wife*. The King James translators felt it should be rendered *wives* in this case. However, other versions such as the New American Standard translate it *women*. This is probably the more accurate choice since there is really no grammatical justification to link them to the deacons that are mentioned in the previous verses (I Timothy 3:8-10).
2. The term *likewise* that is used here is the same word used in verse 8 to introduce the deacons as opposed to the pastor. In the context this term seems to denote a transition from one class to another. If so, the new class in verse 11 would be that of a *woman deacon*.
3. It seems strange that Paul would state the qualifications for the deacon's wife when he states no such qualifications for the wife of a pastor. Obviously the role of an overseer is much more important in terms of authority and responsibility, yet Paul lists no qualifications for the wife of the pastor. This apparent inconsistency also suggests that these women in verse 11 form a category all their own.

There is additional evidence that women did function in this capacity in the New Testament Church. Church history speaks of women deacons. There also seem to be several women who functioned in the work of serving in the

New Testament. In all of these examples listed below, a form of the greek word *diakoneo* is used:

1. Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2).

Phoebe is the clearest example because she is obviously a woman (*our sister*) and she is called a *servant of the church*. The word *servant* here is the same word translated *deacon*.

2. The ministering women (Luke 8:1-3).

Several women who had been healed by Jesus evidently traveled with Jesus and the disciples at times to serve them in the areas of material substance.

3. Dorcas (Acts 9:36-40).

This woman was vitally involved in ministering to the necessity of the saints. The New Testament does not specifically call her a deacon, but the ministry she had related clearly to the function of a deacon.

4. Other significant women of Christian History includes: St. Monica who was the mother of one of the most eminent bishops of the church, St. Augustine. Perpetua (182-203) was a sister of Augustine, and a great African Christian who died at the hands of the Roman government because she would not offer sacrifice to the emperor as god. Felicitas (? - 203) was the midwife of Perpetua. She was placed in a cold, damp and dark dungeon while pregnant by the same Roman government, and was used by them for sport. She fought wild beasts in the amphitheater and was later killed by the government with the sword.

Considering all these things, it is easy to conclude that the New Testament Church had many women who functioned as servants of the Church.

"Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things." (I Timothy 3:11)

Agar points out in reference to I Timothy 3:11, "the King James translation makes Paul say, *Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober,*

faithful in all things. This translation is wrong and dangerously misleading, for it would constitute the wife of a deacon per se, "an official of the local church." But an even more pointed interpretation may also be helpful. The wife of a deacon has functions to carry out as well. Though a deacon's wife may or may not be a deaconess, she yet has directives which may be attributed to the ministry that her husband must carry out. I Timothy 3:8-13 speak of a deacon's function. The function of that office is for deacons with reference to the supportive assistance of the wife of a deacon.

Please note the parallel structure of the duties of the deacon in verses 8 and 9 along with those outlined in verse 11 for the *gynaikas* of the deacon:

Women		Men
a. not malicious gossips for the woman	parallels	not double-tongued for the man.
b. Temperate for the woman	parallels	not addicted too much wine for the man,
c. faithful in all thing for the woman	parallels	holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscious for the man

Not Malicious Gossips - "the greek word of 'malicious gossips' is the same word of *devil* (in the singular). Here it is used as an adjective and thus means 'slanderous' or 'malicious talkers.' Slander is the devil's work. It divides and hurt people. It destroys churches. Malicious gossipers create hatred, suspicions and exhibit confused judgement and uncontrolled speech... Such people often believe their own lies and accusations. A malicious gossip spreads bad rumors, innuendos, criticisms, and lies about people. A malicious talker isn't concerned with fairness or healing, only with striking back, tearing down, hurting, venting anger, or entertaining evil thoughts. Therefore, a malicious gossip has no place in ministering to the neediest members of God's family." This refers to sound mind and good judgement, as opposed to emotional judgement.

Temperate - "No English word is completely satisfactory for rendering the Greek word for 'temperate' (*nephalios*). *Nephalios* can mean sobriety in the use of wine. Here it is used to mean the mental and emotional sobriety of a person's overall character, speech, and conduct, which of course would include sobriety in the use of wine." It denotes self control, balanced judgment, and freedom from debilitating excesses. Negatively, *nephalios* indicate an absence

of any personal disorder that would distort a person's judgment or conduct. Positively, the word describes a person who is stable, circumspect, self-restrained and clearheaded.

"Wives or women who lack self-control and a balanced mental perspective will inevitably undermine the deacon's service within the congregation, lacking self-restraint, they will be easily snared by the devil or false teachers. It is essential that wives working in close association with the diaconate be mentally and emotionally stable and in control. They must be able to remain composed in all circumstances."

Faithful In All Things - "When Paul wrote this passage, some women in Ephesus had already rebelled and even defected from the faith. A few women had 'already turned aside to follow Satan' (I Tim. 5:15). So it was important for deacons' wives to be 'faithful in all things.'" "Of the greek term for 'faithful', the *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* states, '*Pistos* portrays an unshakeable loyalty, which is displayed in a number of ways."

We might expect Paul to say that these women must be faithful to God, to their families, in every relationship and sphere of life, in their commitment to Christ and His Word, in their duties to their families, in their witness to neighbors, and in their responsibilities to the family of God. Every aspect of their life is to be marked by faithfulness.

A woman who commits adultery or is flirtatious is untrustworthy. A woman who neglects her family because of selfish ambitions, or neglects God's people, or walks in disobedience to the Word of God is unfaithful. A fickle, selfish woman who changes her mind or breaks commitments to please her own whims is unreliable.

In helping their deacon husbands in this crucially significant ministry, these women have an important responsibility to fulfill. Thus, we must insist that they, like their husbands, be biblically qualified. Let us not be indifferent to God's instruction regarding deacons' wives. A woman deacon should be known for the fact that when she is given a responsibility she is always faithful to carry it out.

There are many responsibilities in the Church that could best be handled by a godly woman. The first century Church evidently found this to be the case. In our day there are many areas where women can be of tremendous assistance to the work of God. Whenever we fail to use all of the ministries that God has set in the Body, we hinder that Body from reaching its full potential. Whenever we fail to recognize true ministries in an individual, we hinder that person from reaching his/her full potential. Every believer begins with a servant's heart. Out of those who have demonstrated a true servant's heart and attitude, the pastor in consultation with the ministering elders along with the prayerful input of the deacons and deaconess appoints choice servants to function to in the office of the deacon, both male and female.

Section 3: Associates In Ministry - The Ministry and Minister of Music

Every member of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) has the biblical responsibility to edify the body through the ministry of music -(Colossians 3:1-17; Ephesians 5:19,20). Whether you sing in the pew, as a members of The Philadelphia Praise Angels or if you are a member of The Philadelphia Mass Choir, you have a unique responsibility to worship God in song. There are two key administrative areas we enunciate in particular to the Minister of Music.

Section A. The Minister of Music's compensation should be based on biblical precedents and federal/state tax efficient payment plans in keeping with the codes per his tax designation - I Corinthians 9:9-14.

Section B. Periods of refreshment shall be optional with the Minister of Music during each year. These periods shall consist of vacation, seminars, workshops, and conferences which shall help sharpen his ability to minister.

Wisdom should dictate the scheduling of these necessities. Notice of absences should be noted with the pastor and leadership staff at calendar preparation time or as soon as possible in unusual circumstances. A suitable replacement should be obtained when absent in keeping with the spirit of the pastor and the ministry of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) Music Ministry.

I. God's "Due Order" of appointing worshipers to minister continually in the House of the Lord is a Heavenly Eternal Truth which spans both the Old and the New Testaments.

- A. *Ezekiel 28:13-19*: God created and anointed Lucifer to minister praise in an appointed place in appointed garments with appointed movements. (see also *Isaiah 14:11-12*)
- B. *1 Chronicles 28:11-19*: David appointed singers, players and dancers based on the pattern he had seen in heaven, which was confirmed by the prophets Nathan and Gad. (see also *2 Chronicles 29:25*)
- C. *Revelation 14:2-3; 4:9-11; 15:2-4*: Heaven is a place where appointed worshipers minister unto God with singing and movement.

II. In *1 Chronicles 15*, David applied the lesson that he learned the hard way in *1 Chronicles 13* - God has stiff prerequisites for His Appointed Worshipers

- A. Loyalty: "None ought to carry the ark but the Levites..." (*1 Chronicles 15:2*)
 - 1. "Levi" means "joined"
In *Exodus 32:26* the Levites demonstrated their loyalty to the Lord by joining themselves to Moses
 - 2. Appointed worshipers should be joined in spirit to the pastoral leadership of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).
- B. Love of God's House: In *Numbers 3:15, 23, 29, 35*, we see that the Levites lived closer to the tabernacle than any of the other tribes. (*1 Chronicles 6:31-32*)
Appointed worshipers will demonstrate a special love for God's house through their punctuality at, proximity to and frequency in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) facility.
- C. A Servant's Heart: The Levites were willing and able servants of God and God's people.

III. After applying these special spiritual qualifications, David then began to apply musical qualifications to the prospective appointees.

- A. Musical Flexibility: Notice that Asaph's music ministry included singing, percussion, orchestrating, brass, strings, composing, prophesying and teaching - 1

Chronicles 15:19 16:7, 37-42; 25:1; Psalms 73-83

B. Musical Virtuosity: Excellence in musical technique was a hallmark of the Tabernacle of David.

1. Chenaniah "instructed about the song because he was skillful": I Chronicles 15:22
2. The musicians in David's Tabernacle were "instructed in the songs of the Lord" and were "cunning": *1 Chronicles 25*:
3. We are exhorted to play unto the Lord "Skillfully" with "cunning": *Psalm 33:3; Psalm 137:5*
4. We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God: *2 Timothy 2:1*

C. Musical Literacy: The Levites did more than just play music, they recorded it by writing it down; that is why we have the book of Psalms today. (*1 Chronicles 16:4*)

In David's day, the Levites were the only Hebrews who could read or write; today appointed worshipers should develop their music reading skills.

IV. After David sanctified and qualified the Levites, he installed them into ongoing public ministry by the laying on of hands.

A. The sanctified Levites did not enter into public ministry until both leadership and congregation laid hands upon them: *Numbers 8:9-11*

B. Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun were publicly installed by David, the elders, and the people after they had successfully dispatched the assignment of bringing up the ark: *1 Chronicles 16:4,5, 37-43*

Successful fulfillment of an assignment came before appointment: *1 Timothy 3:10*

C. Note the following eight reasons why most local churches do not develop a scripturally solid music ministry. Let The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) profit from these mistakes!

- (1.) Failure to make corporate praise preeminent over everything else in church life.
- (2.) Failure to obey *Psalm 150* and utilize all the performing arts as acts of praise and prophecy.
- (3.) Failure to design a sanctuary suitable for the sacred use of the performing arts.
- (4.) Failure to set an adequate budget for music and the performing arts.

(5.) Failure to insist upon spiritual prerequisites as seen in the ministry of the Levites.

(6.) Failure to insist upon musical qualifications from those who meet the spiritual requirements

(7.) Failure to ordain as associates in ministry or even deacons those worshipers who meet both spiritual and natural qualifications for ministry. (In the Old Testament the "priests, as the sons of Aaron, were the equivalent to the "elders" of the church in the New Testament and the "Levites," the helpers of the sons of Aaron, were the equivalent of the deacons of the New Testament church.)

(8.) Failure to establish an ongoing performing arts training program within The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist).

D. David paid a high price for a place to worship the Lord: *2 Samuel 24:18-25*

Section 4: Associates In Ministry - The Membership Clerks

The Membership Clerk (s) shall keep a complete record of the total membership of The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist). These records include a complete file and pictorial reference of each member.

The Membership Clerk (s) must maintain records of transactions of all business meetings of the church. The Membership Clerk (s) shall maintain all records in chronological sequence and make the same available upon request. (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3)

Section 5: Associates In Ministry - The Hospitality Ministry

From the parking lot to the inner court of the sanctuary the presence of God is to be celebrated and shared. It is the ministry of those who comprise the Hospitality Ministry that such celebration and sharing, as well as impartation is to be expressed. As a key in the varied forms of worship, this Hospitality Ministry rises out of Luke 7:44-48.

Article VII

Funerals

All funerals held in The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) shall be closed casket during the service, but deceased may lie in state prior to the service, if desired by the family. There shall be no fraternal ceremonies held in the church.

Article VIII

Section 1. All paid staff persons are employed by The Philadelphia Fellowship (Baptist) until such time as the need to discontinue the relationship is apparent - Acts 15:36-41. We will follow the Word of God at such a time and the leading of the Spirit of Christ.

Section 1.1 Changes, amendments, alterations to this Membership Covenant may be made at any time. Changes, amendments and alterations must be in keeping with doctrinal statements as outlined in Article III.